

is both unfit and unnecessary. In our opinion, no action is required by the Commission other than to reject the proposals made in this application.

#### Additional references

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**Comment on the proposed conservation of the specific name of *Vespertilio nanus* Peters, 1852 (currently *Pipistrellus nanus*; Mammalia, Chiroptera)**  
(Case 3240; see BZN 60: 42–44)

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I work on African bats (e.g. Van Cakenberghe & De Vree, 1999) and am uncertain that the specific names of *Pipistrellus africanus* (Rüppell, 1842) and *Pipistrellus nanus* (Peters, 1852) are in fact synonyms. For this reason, I oppose the proposal to suppress the specific name of *P. africanus* and suggest that both names be conserved. Although I agree with Meredith Happold that *P. nanus* should be given precedence over *P. africanus* when the two names are considered to be synonyms. The name *P. nanus* has been more widely used than *P. africanus* (281 publications v. 24 during the period 1840–2003; the Commission Secretariat holds these references).

However, there is taxonomic evidence that these two names actually refer to two different taxa. For example, if the dimensions of the *P. africanus* lectotype are compared with those of *P. nanus* specimens from north-eastern Africa we see that *P. africanus* fits within the ranges for most of the dimensions. Nonetheless, it is marginally larger than the maximum values found for *P. nanus* for the length of the maxillary toothrow, the width across the upper molars, the length of the mandibula, and the length of the tibia.

A number of authors (e.g. Cotterill, 1996; Kearney & Taylor, 1997) point out that the systematics of this group of African bats are still not entirely clear, and they

indicate that a revision of the genus is required, especially as north-eastern Africa is a region with a large degree of endemism. To prevent the potentially valid name *P. africanus* being suppressed, I suggest an alternative proposal to the Commission.

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to give the name *nanus* Peters, 1852, as published in the binomen *Vespertilio nanus*, precedence over the name *africanus* Rüppell, 1842, as published in the trinomen *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus*, whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *nanus* Peters, 1852, as published in the binomen *Vespertilio nanus*, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *africanus* Rüppell, 1842, as published in the trinomen *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
  - (b) *africanus* Rüppell, 1842, as published in the trinomen *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus*, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name *nanus* Peters, 1852, as published in the binomen *Vespertilio nanus*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.

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